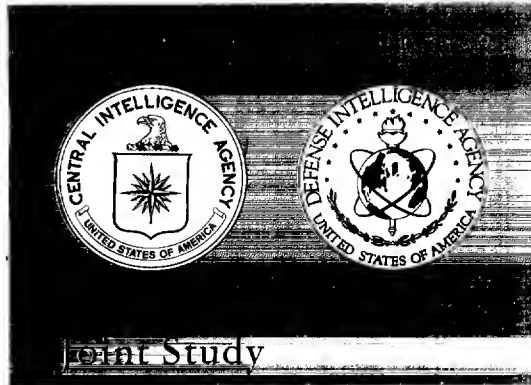


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Weekly Survey of Communist Military Developments in Indochina

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27 March 1974

Fifty-Sixth Report**WEEKLY SURVEY
OF COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS
IN INDOCHINA***

(This report covers the period
from 20 through 26 March 1974)

The Key Points

- Infiltration of new troops was heavy last week. Seven new groups with some 3,500 troops were detected in the Vinh area: four destined for VC MR 5 and three headed for COSVN.
- The entire NVA 46th AAA Regiment has redeployed from Pleiku Province to Darlac Province in MR 2.
- Logistic activity in southern North Vietnam was light again last week, while photography over Laos continued to indicate that the roads are receiving heavy use. In South Vietnam, logistic activity was focused on food shipments.
- In recent months, the Communists have opened new rice supply lines from the Delta to South Vietnam's MR 3.

* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

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Preface

This report is the fifty-sixth in a series summarizing evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military supplies toward and into South Vietnam, (II) significant Communist combat activity, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

DETAILS

I. Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese Personnel and Military Supplies

Personnel Infiltration

1. The North Vietnamese maintained a heavy flow of troop infiltration last week, as seven new regular groups with some 3,500 troops were detected transiting Binh Tram (BT) 8 near Vinh, North Vietnam. Four of the groups with about 2,000 troops are destined for VC MR 5, while the other three groups, totaling 1,500 troops, are traveling to the COSVN area. The gap in group designators between two of the COSVN-bound groups suggests that three presently unobserved groups with an estimated 1,500 troops are, or soon will be, moving to the area. Therefore, they are also included in the table below. A high rate of special-purpose infiltration also occurred last week. Eleven new groups composed of some 375 specialists were detected at BT 8 - five destined for COSVN, three for southern Laos/MR 559, two for MR Tri-Thien, and one for the B-3 Front.

**Comparative Starts of Troops
from North Vietnam, by Destination
1 September-26 March**

	1972-73	1973-74
Total	85,000	71,000
MR Tri-Thien	26,000	2,000
MR 5	9,000	8,000
B-3 Front	14,000	8,500
COSVN	25,000	30,000
Southern Laos/MR 559	11,000	22,500

2. Although overall troop infiltration is still considerably below last year's pace, the gap is narrowing. The number of troops sent to COSVN and southern Laos/MR 559 is higher than last year, while the number sent to MR 5 is nearly as great. Infiltration to MR Tri-Thien and the B-3 Front still lags behind, however.

Redeployments

3. COMINT of 23 March confirms the movement of the entire NVA 46th AAA Regiment from Pleiku to Darlac Province in MR 2, where one

battalion has been operating since January. The regiment is now located in the southwestern part of the province, providing Communist forces with additional firepower to counter the government's recent attempts to interdict Communist Route 14 (see the order of battle map).

Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies

North Vietnam

4. For the second consecutive week, logistic activity in southern North Vietnam was relatively light. On 18 March, logistic units stationed at the Cho Si Railroad Station north of Vinh shipped 20 tons of cargo to nearby storage areas, and two days later another 20 tons were dispatched. This slow pace of activity was reversed later in the week, however, as at least 260 tons of ammunition and petroleum were sent from this area to northern Laos on 23 and 24 March.

5. In the area between Quang Khe and the DMZ, logistic activity was somewhat heavier, as several large cargo shipments were noted. Between 18 and 23 March, at least three motorized launches pulling 32 barges with 350 tons of cargo were detected in COMINT. Units involved in these shipments also reported that about 670 tons of ammunition remained in storage awaiting further shipment.

Laos

6. Limited aerial reconnaissance of the main supply corridor in Laos again made it difficult to measure the level of activity from Tchepone to the tri-border area this week. On most days, only 25-50 trucks were observed moving south, and a generally smaller number heading north. Field analysis of the photography, however, continues to indicate that the road is being heavily used, suggesting that significant numbers of trucks may be moving through the Laotian Panhandle undetected. Increased use of Communist Route 14 in South Vietnam also may be partly responsible for the low number of trucks actually observed moving.

South Vietnam

7. In South Vietnam, food shipments in the northern Quang Tri area highlighted logistic activity this week. On 18 March, logistic units in southern North Vietnam shipped 170 tons of rice to Dong Ha. Several days later, on 20 March, 40 trucks reportedly were scheduled to carry some 165 tons of rice from northern Quang Tri Province to southern MR 1 along the Communists' western supply corridor. Finally, on 24 March, logistic units operating along Route 9 (see the transportation map) reported receiving 25 tons of 130-mm ammunition.

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

		MR 1	
VC/NVA ¹	RVNAF ²	VC/NVA	RVNAF
182,000	372,000	84,000	103,000
		325th	VNMC
		324B	Airborne
		304th	1st
		711th	2nd
		2nd ³	3rd
		673rd AAA	Regional Forces

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Although present for duty strength is no longer available, it is estimated to be about 85% of assigned strength.

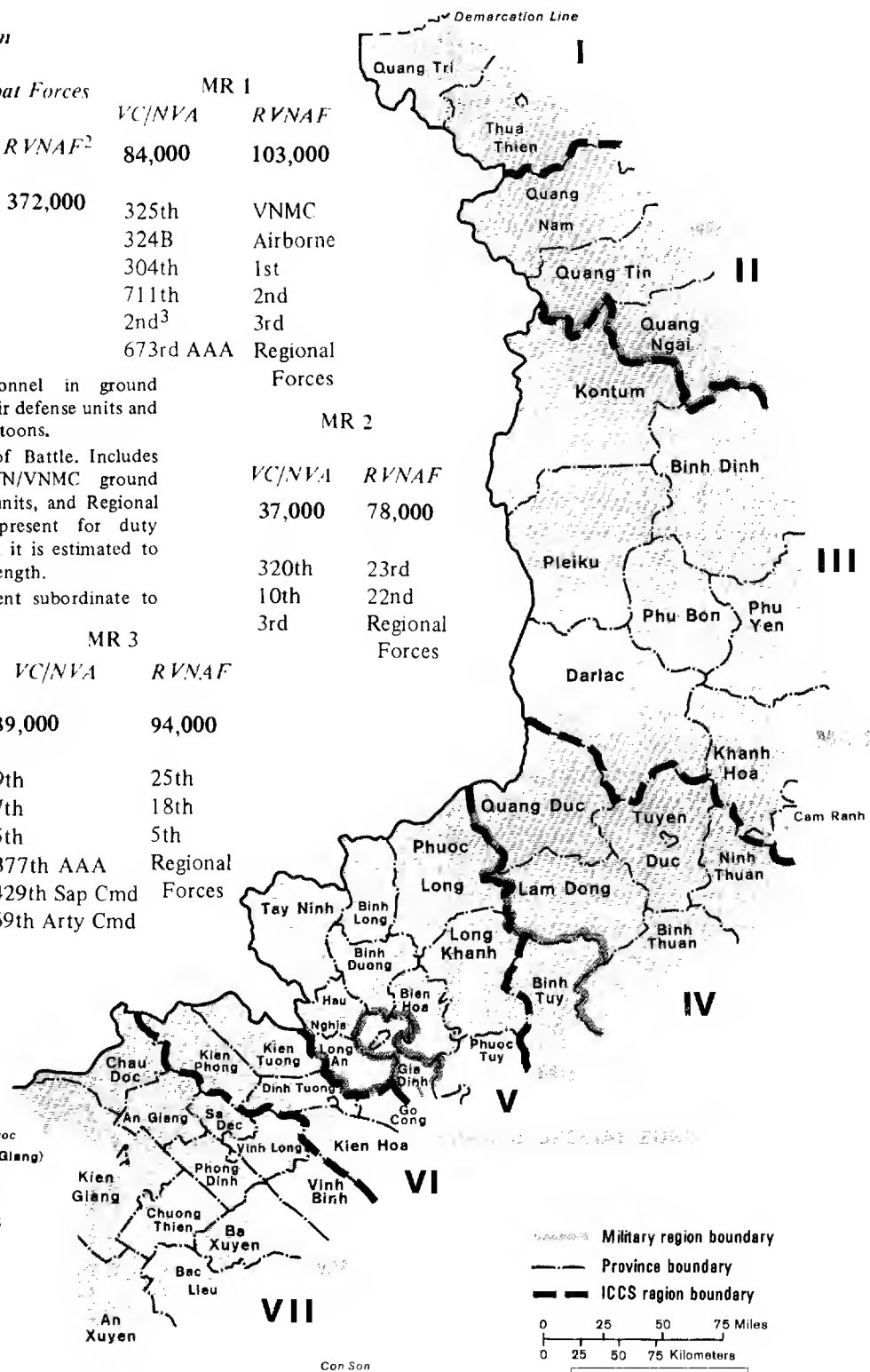
3. Only one infantry regiment subordinate to the division.

MR 3

VC/NVA	RVNAF
39,000	94,000
9th	25th
7th	18th
5th	5th
377th AAA	Regional Forces
429th Sap Cmd	
69th Arty Cmd	

MR 4

VC/NVA	RVNAF
22,000	97,000
1st ³	21st
	9th
	7th
	Regional Forces



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II. Significant Communist Combat Activity

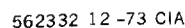
8. Communist cease-fire violations rose from an average of 75 per day last week to 93 this week, a level slightly below the 1973 daily average of 100. Communist casualties decreased significantly from 148 to 107 per day, but ARVN casualties rose from 28 to 32 daily. MR 2, scene of major clashes last week, was relatively quiet except for a Regional Force operation against the VC MR 6 Headquarters in Binh Thuan Province. MR 4 continued to register the majority of violations, which consisted primarily of minor harassing actions, attacks-by-fire, and limited ground probes.

III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina

Communists Open New Rice Supply Line from Delta to South Vietnam's MR 3

9. Recent reporting indicates that over the past several months the Communists have been shipping rice regularly from the northern Delta to "liberated areas" in Tay Ninh and Binh Long Provinces in South Vietnam's MR 3. Most of the rice is purchased from South Vietnamese civilians in the northern border provinces of South Vietnam's MR 4 and channeled northward into southern Cambodia through Communist-controlled exit points along the border. At the end of 1973, the Communists were estimated to be moving about 600 tons of rice a month through Hong Ngu -- the most active of these exit points. The estimate was based in part on an aerial reconnaissance mission [] which sighted at least 500 large sampans moving freely from Hong Ngu across the border. In early March the commanding general of the ARVN 9th Division indicated that this activity was continuing. According to him, a great deal of rice is still being collected in Chau Doc and Kien Phong Provinces and moved along canals to northern Kien Tuong Province and thence across the border into Svay Rieng Province, Cambodia.

10. The ultimate destination of the rice being collected in the Delta apparently is the Communist-controlled territory stretching across South Vietnam's northern MR 3. Although this is a rice-deficit area, the Communists in the past have avoided drawing large amounts from the Delta by supplying the area with Cambodian-grown rice. Apparently the reduced availability of rice from Cambodian sources over the past year has forced the Communists to open a regular supply line from the Delta. Other factors prompting this move may be the increased rice requirements of the Communists in northern MR 3 to feed a substantial number of civilians as well as their own military forces, and the South Vietnamese rice control program, which in some parts of southern South Vietnam has put a squeeze on Communist procurement activities.



ANNEX

INFILTRATION OF NORTH VIETNAMESE PERSONNEL
TO THE SOUTH

Since the implementation of the cease-fire settlement for South Vietnam on 27 January 1973, almost 136,000 North Vietnamese troops and specialists have infiltrated southward. Nearly 111,000 of this total have started south since that time. Since 15 June 1973, when the original accord was reaffirmed, almost 85,000 troops and specialists have been sent south. The following table shows the number of North Vietnamese troops starting south, by destination, since 1 January 1973.

**Number of Troops Entering the Pipeline Destined
for South Vietnam, Southern Laos, and Cambodia
Since 1 January 1973¹**

	COSVN	B-3 Front	MR 5	MR Tri- Thien	Southern Laos/ MR 559	Total
Total	43,000	14,000	15,000	14,000	26,500	112,500
1973						
Jan-Mar	12,000	5,500	4,000	5,000	1,000	27,500
Apr-Jun	1,000	....	....	7,000	1,500	9,500
Jul-Aug	....	....	3,000	....	1,500	4,500
Sep	....	....	2,000	2,000	3,000	7,000
Oct	....	....	....	....	14,000	14,000
Nov	1,000	1,000	....	....	5,500	7,500
Dec	3,500	1,000	....	....	....	4,500
1974						
Jan	10,000	3,000	....	....	....	13,000
Feb	5,500	1,500	1,500	....	....	8,500
Mar 1-26	10,000	2,000	4,500	....	....	16,500

1. Excluding special-purpose personnel. The totals are rounded to the nearest 500.

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